

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE

**Long view of history
on display at Iraqi museum**
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 83/NO. 13 APRIL 1, 2019

SWP takes campaign to small towns, rural areas

BY ROY LANDERSEN

At the heart of the week-in, week-out, political work of the Socialist Workers Party and its sister Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.K. is party members going out of the cities far and wide to talk to working people on their doorsteps, in villages, towns and rural areas. We introduce ourselves, our party, our candidates and program, and tell people about working-class struggles we think they should join us in supporting.

We want to discuss with workers, farmers and youth what can be done about the deteriorating conditions of work and life we face today, a product of the dog-eat-dog capitalist system. In the course of back-and-forth discussions that arise, we introduce the *Militant* and books by leaders of the SWP.

We say only working people can
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No to attacks on Muslims, mosques in New Zealand!



March 16 march in Melbourne, Australia, protesting anti-immigrant lone gunman's armed assault on worshippers attending services at two mosques in New Zealand that killed 50.

Solidarity with victims of anti-Muslim killings

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — A brutal massacre by a rightist shooter that left 50 dead and dozens injured at two mosques in the city of Christchurch March 15 has been seized on by ruling politicians to rally support

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Protest NZ rulers' efforts to restrict political rights!

The following statement was issued March 16 by the Communist League in New Zealand.

Statement of Communist League in New Zealand

The Communist League condemns, in the strongest way, the rightist shooting massacre at the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in Christchurch that has left 50 dead and 50 injured. The shooting took place as hundreds of worshippers had gathered to pray. We call on workers, farmers and all defenders of democratic rights to condemn this brutal assault.

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Boeing bosses' drive for profit leads to deadly plane crashes

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Over the last five months the new flagship of Boeing's fleet — the 737 MAX airliner — went down in Ethiopia and Indonesia shortly after takeoff in two similar and deadly crashes that took 346 lives. At fault is the profit-driven capitalist system, which tosses concern for safety aside under the lash of competition.

Evidence is mounting that both disasters were caused by a new software system — that becomes active without the crew's knowledge or training — repeatedly forcing the planes into what became uncontrollable dives.

Yet for three days after the crash in Ethiopia, Boeing, backed by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, continued to claim that the planes were safe to fly. At stake are market share and profits worth hundreds of billions of dollars in an expanding global airline industry, as the U.S. aerospace giant is locked in ongoing rivalry with European-based Airbus.

The Ethiopian Airlines jet crashed six minutes after takeoff from Addis Ababa March 10, killing all aboard. Ethiopian Transport Minister Dagmawit Moges noted March 17 that records from the plane's recovered black boxes showed "a clear similarity" with the earlier crash of the 737 MAX operated by Lion Air. It plunged into

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New York protests demand gov't give immigrants driver's licenses



Protest in Riverhead, Long Island March 12, part of actions in New York, New Jersey and other states demanding driver's licenses for immigrants, a move that would strengthen working class.

BY SETH GALINSKY

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. — "What do we want? Driver's licenses. Why do we want them? To drive without fear!" some 170 people chanted in English and Spanish as they marched through this town of 14,000 March 12.

The marchers were overwhelmingly immigrants from Mexico and Latin America, including construction workers, landscapers, cooks, house painters and workers from area fruit and vegetable farms, grape vineyards and nurseries.

They are demanding the New York legislature pass a law to allow immigrants without documents the government recognizes to get driver's licenses. The action was organized by a coalition that includes SEPA Mujer, Rural and Migrant Ministry and other church, immigrant rights and civil liberties groups.

A similar demonstration of nearly 1,000 took place in Albany the same day. There are hundreds of thousands of undocumented workers in the state.

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Syrian gov't, Moscow step up strikes on opposition forces in Idlib province

BY TERRY EVANS

Stepped-up bombing of Syrian rebel-held communities in Idlib province by the government in Damascus and its backer in Moscow are deepening the ruinous conditions eight years of war have inflicted on working people there.

Conflicting interests among the capitalist powers intervening in Syria's civil war — Washington, Moscow, Tehran and its Hezbollah paramilitary allies, and Ankara — are sharpening, and Washington is finding it impossible to withdraw its troops intervening there.

The Syrian dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad claims that with the help of Moscow and Tehran his regime will reimpose its rule over all of Syria. It faces two primary obstacles. One is the Turkish government-backed groups and Islamist forces who've been driven from across the country into Idlib. The other is the U.S.-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic For-

ces that control the northeastern Syrian region and much of the territory and oil fields south of there wrested in combat from Islamic State.

The Russian government ordered
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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Locked-out Quebec aluminum workers reject bosses' ultimatum

Chicago Symphony Orchestra players strike to defend pensions

Algerian protesters say, ‘We need to get rid of the system’

BY JANET POST

The movement in Algeria demanding the immediate resignation of ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika continues to pick up steam. Working people view his March 11 announcement that he would not run in upcoming elections, coupled with postponing elections until after the writing of a new constitution, as a subterfuge.

The announcement was answered by hundreds of thousands of people who flooded the streets of Algiers March 15. This was the biggest action yet since protests broke out across the country after Bouteflika said in February that he planned to run for a fifth term in the April 18 elections. A general strike March 11 included public-sector unions and shopkeepers.

“No to the violation of the constitution,” “System, get out. The people have arrived,” “You prolong your term, we prolong our combat,” were among the signs carried at the March 15 protest.

Another sign said, “Not Washington or Paris. Only we ourselves will elect the president,” directed at imperialist intervention in Algeria. Protesters were incensed at the tweet by French President Emmanuel Macron that Bouteflika’s announcement “has opened a new page in Algerian democracy.”

Bourgeois opposition parties have played little role in the actions, which tens of thousands of young people have helped lead. Half of the population of Algeria is under 30 years old and over a quarter of those are unemployed.

Protesters chanted, “We wanted elections without Bouteflika, we were

given Bouteflika without elections,” reported BBC News.

Bouteflika, 82, has been president of this former French colony since 1999 and played a key role in negotiating an end that year to a bloody 10-year conflict with armed Islamist groups. He was paralyzed from a stroke in 2013 and has not addressed the country since then and rarely appears in public. The government is run by the army, his supporters in the National Liberation Front party, his brother Said, and capitalists who have lucrative state contracts.

In 1962 working people made a revolution, overthrowing French colonial rule in Algeria. A workers and farmers government came to power headed by Ahmed Ben Bella. But three years later it was overthrown in a coup organized by Minister of Defense Col. Houari Boumedienne, who was supported by then Foreign Minister Bouteflika. The gains of the revolution were reversed.

Ben Bella was thrown in prison for 15 years, then exiled for another decade. The revolutionary government of Cuba had supported the Algerian Revolution with economic and military aid, doctors and other health workers, and helped defend Algeria against provocations from neighboring Morocco in 1963.

In a June 27, 1965, speech, Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro denounced the coup, which was carried under the banner of “defending” the revolution. “Those who disregard the force of the masses and who may try to replace them with the force of the barracks, behind the people’s back” can never be revolutionary, Castro said.



AP photo/Anis Belghoul

Teachers hold placards outside Algiers post office March 13, reading at left, “You have millions. We are millions of teachers” and in center, “I dream of a democratic Algeria.”

Export of oil and gas accounts today for 95 percent of the country’s foreign earnings. The government had used some of the energy profits to fund welfare programs aimed at keeping workers and farmers from rising up.

But since 2014 when crude oil prices plummeted to \$50 a barrel welfare programs have been slashed and inflation has risen. Economic growth fell to 2.3 percent in 2018 from 3.8 in 2014. The oil industry has been rife with corruption and oil bosses are “watching with concern to see if strikes that have hit other industries spread to Algeria’s energy industry,” said the *Washington Post*.

In France, which has the largest pop-

ulation of Algerians outside the country, some 10,000 people protested at Republic Square in Paris March 3. Six thousand demonstrated in Marseille, and there was another rally in Bordeaux.

Several thousand Algerians rallied in front of the Algerian Consulate in Montreal March 17. This was the fourth protest there in as many weeks in solidarity with the actions in Algeria.

“We are against the rule of Bouteflika and the regime,” Mustafa Deba, a mechanic, told the *Militant* there. “We are for a regime chosen by the people.”

Joe Young contributed to this article from Montreal.

Campaign with the Socialist Workers Party candidates!

California

Dennis Richter, Los Angeles City Council
Laura Garza, Los Angeles School Board

Florida

Anthony Dutrow, Miami City Commission

Illinois

Dan Fein, Chicago Mayor

Kentucky

Amy Husk, Governor

Minnesota

David Rosenfeld, St. Paul City Council

Nebraska

Joe Swanson, Lincoln Mayor

New Jersey

Lea Sherman, State Assembly
Candace Wagner, State Assembly

New York

Seth Galinsky, New York City Public Advocate
Samantha Hamlin, Mayor of Troy
Lawrence Quinn, Troy City Council

Pennsylvania

Osborne Hart, Philadelphia Mayor
John Staggs, Philadelphia City Council
Malcolm Jarrett, Pittsburgh City Council

Texas

Alyson Kennedy, Dallas Mayor

Washington

Henry Clay Dennison, Seattle City Council

See directory on page 8 to contact party campaign office nearest you.

THE MILITANT

Solidarity with Wabtec workers

When striking members of the United Electrical Workers held mass pickets outside Wabtec in late February, they were pointing the way forward for the entire labor movement. Their fight against steep cuts demanded by the company is a fight for all of us.



United Electrical Workers union
Feb. 26 Wabtec picket, Erie, Pennsylvania.

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SWP campaigns far and wide

Continued from front page

forge a movement to unite all those who are exploited and oppressed to fight to defend our interests.

As Linda Harris, Communist League candidate for the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in Australia, says in her campaign flyer, “Through our labor, working people in this country and worldwide produce more than enough wealth to provide education, health care, housing and retirement to every human being on earth, for a lifetime. Our campaign is part of the working-class battle to recognize we are capable of acting independently of the bosses in the political arena, fighting to take power out of the hands of a ruling rich minority, and begin organizing society based on the needs and rights of working people.”

We discuss how the normal functioning of the capitalist system — its disdain for working people, its deepening social and moral crisis, and political developments worldwide, like the endless wars across the Middle East as well as the growing rivalry between the rulers of the U.S. and China — impacts the working class and its allies.

We discuss the big questions facing working people — like the need for our unions to fight for workers control over production and conditions on the job to prevent disasters like the two recent Boeing 737 MAX plane crashes. These were the product of the capitalist bosses’ drive for profit.

A boost to this work is the range of SWP candidates standing for office in 11 states across the country (see box this page 2), as well as Communist League candidates in other countries.

We offer books at special prices: *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism*; *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; and *The Clintons’ Anti-Working-Class Record*, all three by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes. Also, *In Defense of the US Working Class* and *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters; and “It’s the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US ‘Justice’ System”: *The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the*

US Working Class.

We also offer over 200 other titles on the history of union and political struggles and lessons of previous revolutions.

These books clarify, more lastingly and deeply than an article in the *Militant* can, that the carnage inflicted on working people today is the only future this system has to offer. They explain how workers and farmers need to break with the rulers’ political parties and state, and chart a course to take political power.

We say that there *is* an example in today’s world where workers and farmers successfully fought to control their own destiny. The Cuban Revolution is an example for all workers and farmers to study and emulate. It shows that working people can and will make a socialist revolution in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Alongside others, we are building the April 21-May 5 May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba. This provides an opportunity for workers and young people to bring solidarity and their own class struggle experiences in the capitalist world, as



Militant/Dan Fein

Fidelina Santos buys Spanish edition of *Is Socialist Revolution in the US Possible?* from Tom Ricci and Naomi Craine in Chicago March 12. They were campaigning door to door with Dan Fein, SWP candidate for mayor. Ricci, a rail carman, said, “This was the opposite” to his experience canvassing for Democrats years ago. People were “enthusiastic about communist literature.” Workers they met bought three books by SWP leaders and a *Militant* subscription.

well as to learn about the revolution and its 60-year history firsthand. Joining the hundreds of thousands of Cuban working people marching on May Day in Havana is a highlight of the brigade.

To join with us knocking on workers’ doors, and to find out more about the May Day brigade, contact the SWP or Communist League branch nearest you (see directory on page 8).

New York protests demand right to driver’s licenses

Continued from front page

This correspondent, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City Public Advocate, joined in, backing the fight for driver’s licenses and calling for amnesty for all undocumented workers in the U.S.

This is not a small question for working people, especially in small towns and rural areas where there is little public transportation. All workers who don’t have licenses, if stopped by police, face a fine of up to \$300, impoundment of their car and even jail time, as well as steep towing and “storage fees.” Immigrant workers face an added risk — possible deportation.

“A friend picks me up to go to work every day,” one farmworker who didn’t want to give her name, told the *Militant*. “To get groceries I have to take a taxi and that can cost \$60.”

Diana, a stay-at-home mom who asked that we only use her first name, said the first time her husband was

stopped by cops was when she was in the hospital during the birth of one of her children. “Between the fines and the charge for getting the car out of impoundment it was over \$800,” she said. Diana was born in the United States, but her husband was born in Ecuador. They have been married more than a decade and their children were born here.

After her husband was stopped a second time, she quit her job. “I drive my husband to work. Then I take the kids to school. Then later in the day I pick him up from work and the kids from school,” she said. “If he could get a license I could go back to work. It would make a big difference in our lives.”

A bill before the state legislature would create a special license — which wouldn’t be legal for anything but driving — that immigrants without a social security number could get. It has the backing of dozens of state assemblymen and senators. Gov. Andrew Cuomo has said that if the bill passes he will sign it, but has done nothing to promote it.

Since at least 2017 the New York State Farm Bureau, which organizes many capitalist farmers, has backed similar legislation. These farmers are worried about a shortage of farm labor at the wages they pay.

Several municipal governments and officials around the state are backing the measure, including the New York City Council, Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and Riverhead Police Chief David Hegermiller. Democratic Party presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, who has opposed giving immigrants driver’s li-

censes for most of her political career, now backs this bill.

But support is far from universal. A bipartisan committee of the Oswego County legislature voted in January to oppose the measure. “New York State presently suspends or revokes driver’s licenses for various illegal acts, including nonpayment of child support, delinquent taxes and refusal to submit to a breath test, yet this act would reward illegal entry into the United States with a driver’s license,” the committee resolution said.

In interests of working class

Many U.S.-born workers would welcome granting licenses to undocumented workers. Winning this would widen the door to eliminating other anti-working-class restrictions on licenses, like those mentioned in the Oswego resolution.

And it would break down barriers between native-born and immigrant workers and help unify the working class in fighting attacks from the bosses and their government.

Twelve states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico already allow undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver’s license.

Victor Cortez, a farmworker near Rochester who has lived in the U.S. for 15 years, told the protest in Albany that he had to wait two days to get someone to take him to the doctor after he was injured on the job because he didn’t have a license.

“We’re not asking for favors,” he told the crowd. “We are just asking for a bit of what we give to this state.”

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Cuba: ‘We will defend our revolution, no matter what’

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — “We are living through a time of many threats because of the aggressiveness of the U.S. government,” Teresa Amarelle, general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), told a meeting of more than 150 people here March 16. The event was sponsored by the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí! Coalition. Amarelle spoke along with other members of a delegation from Cuba who are participating in International Women’s Month activities at the United Nations.

“Every day they distort the reality of the Cuban people,” she said, referring to the U.S. government’s stepped-up smear campaign against Cuba and the role of Cuban volunteer doctors and others in Venezuela. “They claim that we are responsible for aggression, misery and terrorism directed at the Venezuelan people.”

Amarelle noted the long-standing Cuban policy of not interfering in the internal affairs of other nations. “Revolutions are not exported,” she said. “They are made by the peoples. We made our own revolution in Cuba and we are going to defend it whatever the price. It’s up to the Venezuelan people to defend theirs.”

One of the biggest slanders that U.S. officials have been promoting is that Cuba is in control of Venezuelan intelligence and its military.

There are some 20,000 Cuban internationalist volunteers in Venezuela, most of them health care workers and teachers as well as some advisers to the Venezuelan military.

“Yes, we send doctors to save lives and not just in Venezuela,” Amarelle said. “We send them to more than 50 countries around the world. We have restored eyesight to a million people.”

The Cuban volunteers, most of whom are women, she said, go to the most isolated places in the countryside and working-class barrios in Caracas to bring health care.

“This can only be done when there is a vocation for justice, when there is solidarity,” she added. “If that is what they accuse us of, then fine, we’re going to

keep doing it.”

Amarelle noted that next year is the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Federation of Cuban Women, which just held its 10th congress. “Our strength is in our numbers,” she said, noting that “91.4 percent of Cuban women above 14 years old are members.”

Meeting chair Gail Walker, a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba and executive director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, encouraged audience members to go to Cuba and see the revolution for themselves. She pointed to tables at the side of the room where they could get information and sign up for the upcoming May Day International Volunteer Work Brigade in Solidarity with Cuba, IFCO/Pastors for Peace Caravan and the Venceremos Brigade.

Boeing bosses’ profit drive leads to plane crash

Continued from front page

the Sea of Java off Indonesia Oct. 29.

The Chinese government, presiding over what is about to become the world’s largest aviation market, was the first to ground the Boeing plane the day after the crash. Dozens of other governments in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America followed suit. Boeing shares spiraled down, while Airbus stocks rose. Despite a personal plea from the CEO of Boeing to let the plane keep flying in the U.S., President Donald Trump announced March 13 that the FAA was halting flights of the new airliner.

Boeing bosses came under pressure in 2011 to respond when American Airlines decided to order Airbus’ A320neo instead of the 737. This was a new, more fuel efficient jet. Boeing dropped plans for a new single-aisle aircraft, and scrambled instead to install new generation engines and upgrade software in its top-selling 737. This kept the basic 50-year-old airframe design, saving the bosses massive new capital investment.

However, to avoid them scraping the ground, the new larger engines had to be mounted jutting forward and higher on the wings, causing a



Militant/Mike Shur

Members of Cuban delegation attending U.N. Women’s Month activities speak at March 16 New York meeting. From left, Yenisey González, president of National Union of Cuban Jurists in Granma province; Manuel Vázquez, deputy director of Cenesex, the National Center for Sexual Education; Teresa Amarelle, general secretary of Federation of Cuban Women; Miguel Barnet, president of the Union of Writers and Artists; and Luis Morlote, UNEAC vice president.

change in lift aerodynamics. This required the company to design a computer system “fix” to compensate for the plane’s tendency to nose up into a stall when under full power at lower speeds, as just after takeoff.

After the crash in Indonesia, it was revealed that neither Boeing’s flight manuals nor the FAA-approved pilot training for the 737 MAX explained that the new software system was designed to automatically take over if it received data indicating a potential stall. Without proper training, the crew wouldn’t know the system was activated even as the computer forced the plane’s nose down. Dealing with this has been described by experienced pilots as fighting “a bucking bronco.”

Cutting corners in drive for profit

Boeing’s selling point for the new model was that airlines could avoid expensive long pilot simulator training. Pilots trained on the older 737, the world’s most widely used commercial jet, were required only to do an “iPad lesson for an hour,” Dennis Tajer from the Allied Pilots Association at American Airlines told the press.

If triggered by false readings from just a single sensor, the new system can unexpectedly and repeatedly override manual flight controls. If the pilots don’t know how to disable it — and they weren’t trained on this — the result can be an uncontrollable dive.

As part of a growing practice of “self-regulation,” the FAA delegated more of its airworthy safety assessments over to Boeing’s own engineers. This expedited FAA approval of the 737 MAX and its new feature, named the “Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System.”

“They have sold this aircraft on the basis that if you can fly” earlier model 737s, “you can fly this,” aviation consultant Neil Hansford told the March 16 *Australian*. This is part of the trend for modern jetliners to be increasingly automated, dumbing down pilot inputs, a deadly trap in an emergency.

After the Indonesian crash, Tajer said that Boeing’s withholding of crucial information was a “failure of the safety culture.” Since the crashes, numerous pilots’ reports flagging problems in both the flight control systems and in pilot training programs for the new plane have become public. After the Ethio-

pian crash, two flight attendants unions called for the planes to be grounded.

For workers control of production

Inside the giant Boeing plant near Seattle, where the push is on for workers to continue producing 52 of the 737 MAX planes a month, the two crashes are being widely discussed.

“The company told workers not to talk to the press,” a worker employed on the 737 MAX line, who didn’t want to give his name for fear of reprisal from Boeing bosses, told the *Militant*. If they did, he said, they would face “consequences for their job.”

“The industry has a pattern of putting profits ahead of safety,” he said. “The unions of the pilots, flight attendants and machinists need to have a voice in the safety of the planes. We need union control of safety on the job.”

It will take fighting working-class action to win workers control of production at every level, from aircraft design to air crew training. This is the only road to make flying safe in an era of intensified capitalist competition and cost-cutting.

Solidarity with Muslims, mosques

Continued from front page

behind their police and spy agencies under the banner of “national unity.”

At the same time, working people in their tens of thousands throughout the country have looked for and found ways to offer solidarity to Muslims and immigrants who were political targets of the attack.

“This affects all of us. It would be like someone coming into my *marae* [a center of Maori community life] and shooting,” Jorjah Mohi, a young Maori carpentry and construction student, told *Militant* worker correspondents Felicity Coggan and Annelucia Vermunt. They met while showing solidarity outside the police cordon around the Linwood Mosque March 17.

Coggan and Vermunt traveled to Christchurch to offer support on behalf of the Communist League and to join political discussions in the aftermath of the massacre.

Tens of thousands have attended

vigils in cities and towns across the country to offer solidarity to those targeted. Thousands of high school students rallied in Christchurch March 18 to honor the dead. At least two of those killed attended high school. Millions of dollars have been donated online to assist the families of the victims and support their mosques.

Lone rightist shooter

Eyewitness accounts indicate that the same lone shooter was involved in the killings at both the Al Noor and Linwood mosques. On March 16 police charged 28-year-old Brenton Tarrant, an Australian citizen, with murder.

Tarrant, a self-proclaimed “eco-fascist,” posted a 74-page anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim manifesto on the internet before the attack. He wrote that he wanted to “bring to attention the truth of the assault on our civilization, that no where in the world was

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Atlanta

The Yellow Vest Movement: France’s ‘Déplorable’ Mobilize in Their Thousands to Protest the Effects of Capitalism’s Grinding Crisis. Fri., March 29, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 777 Cleveland Ave. SW, Suite 103. Tel (678) 528-7828.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Socialist Workers Party Candidates Speak in Interests of All Those Exploited and Oppressed by Capitalist Rule. Speakers: Dan Fein, SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago; Amy Husk, SWP candidate for governor of Kentucky. Fri., April 5. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: dinner, \$10; program, \$5. 1858 W. Cermak Rd., 2nd floor. Tel: (312) 455-0111.

NEW YORK

New York

Join the Fight for Driver’s Licenses; Amnesty for All Undocumented Immigrants in U.S.! Sat., March 30, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5. 307 W. 36th St. 13th floor. Tel: 646-434-8117.

Kentucky teachers fight state moves against union, pensions

BY SAMIR HAZBOUN

FRANKFORT, Ky. — “It just feels like we can’t trust the system right now,” Sheri Tabor, a teacher in Oldham County, told the Louisville *Courier-Journal* March 7 as she rallied at the state Capitol here. She and hundreds of other teachers were protesting bills in the legislature that would weaken teachers’ union control over pensions and help promote financial aid for private schools at the expense of public education.

On seven different days over the last month teachers and their supporters have called in sick to attend spirited protests outside the state legislative chambers. A good number of students came as well.

The teachers’ actions resulted in the closing of schools in at least 10 school districts and have stalled lawmakers’ efforts to pass two bills. House Bill 225 would have reduced the Kentucky Education Association’s role in selecting the board that controls the Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System. House Bill 205 would have rewarded contributors to private school scholarship funds with tax breaks.

The largest participation came from teachers in Jefferson County, which includes Louisville, that has some 6,700 teachers and 98,000 students.

Some teachers said they mounted the protests over concern that the bills might be snuck back into consideration, tacked on as so-called mule bills before the close of the state legislature March 28.

The teachers have little confidence in these elected representatives. Last year legislators added an attack on teachers’ pensions onto a sewage bill. The teachers mobilized against the moves on their pensions and to cut funding for schools even further. Gov. Matt Bevin called them “thugs” for protesting. They succeeded in beating back the worst of the attacks.

‘We need to expand the protests’

“We need more than Jefferson County out,” Lora Ruttan, 39, a Louisville high school dance teacher told the *Militant*

at the Capitol rotunda. “We don’t want to lose union control of our pensions.” Her friend, a 10-year teacher who didn’t want her name used for fear of administration reprisal, agreed, saying, “We need the whole state out. That’s what worked in West Virginia.”

The most powerful and effective school workers strike last spring took place in West Virginia, marked by the militant traditions of coal miners’ battles there.

Teachers told the *Militant* about having to spend hundreds of dollars every year on school supplies and snacks for students, complaining that schools lack the basics.

“The majority of schools in Kentucky have no nurses,” said Shelley Brown March 12. “We have to set up a part of our school office as a ‘sick area’ for kids.”

School administrators and some state legislators assailed the teachers for calling in sick to attend the rallies. In an



Militant/Samir Hazboun

Kentucky teachers rally March 7 to protest government moves to attack their union. Sickouts over seven different days have closed schools and succeeded in stalling threatened cutbacks.

attempt to intimidate the teachers, the Kentucky Department of Education demanded the names of all those who called in sick and proof they were ill.

Some of the media tried to find and feature students’ parents who would

criticize teachers for causing cancelled classes and forcing them to deal with kids out of school. But “many JCPS parents say they support teachers despite the inconvenience of sickouts,” the *Courier-Journal* had to concede March 12.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

Locked out Quebec aluminum workers reject bosses’ ultimatum

After 14 months picket lines remain up at the massive ABI Becancour, Quebec, aluminum smelter after locked-out members of United Steelworkers Local 9700 voted down the latest concessions contract. An overwhelming 82 percent of the strikers voted “no” at a mass union meeting March 11. ABI is owned by Alcoa and Rio Tinto Alcan.

“This offer, if we can call it an offer, was completely ridiculous,” ABI production worker Constant Cote told the *Militant* by phone March 14. “It would take away our job security. The union wouldn’t be able to defend us.”

“For sure we want a contract but this wasn’t acceptable. Seniority was attacked, the back-to-work protocol and other things in the offer” had to be rejected, said production worker Lissane Corriveau the day after the vote.

The Quebec government has effec-

tively been subsidizing the lockout — forgoing \$165 million in 2018 alone — in ABI electric bills owed to government-owned Hydro Quebec. They justify the move by saying the bosses’ lockout is an “Act of God.”

In addition to other drastic cutbacks, the bosses demanded an unprecedented back-to-work protocol lasting 10 months or longer, during which the work of regular employees would continue to be done by managers and contract workers. This would hit the newest workers the hardest since they wouldn’t have work, or pay, and would no longer receive \$635 a week union strike benefits.

The company “added new concessions demands in the middle of the conflict and it broke off negotiations three times,” Local 9700 President Clement Masse told the *Militant*. “Our response came on March 11.”

During the lockout over 400 local unions have made one-off or weekly

contributions that help sustain the workers. Local 9700 is well-known over years for its acts of financial solidarity to other striking workers around the province. This solidarity is now being returned.

Send solidarity messages and donations to Metallos SL 9700 F.D.P. Attention Eric Moore, section locale 9700, 8310, rue Desormeaux, Becancour, Quebec G9H 2X2. Credit card donations can also be made at: www.metallos.org/lockout-abi/.

—John Steele

Chicago Symphony Orchestra players strike to defend pensions

CHICAGO — Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians put down their instruments and raised picket signs March 11, opposing management’s demand to replace their guaranteed “defined benefit” pension with “direct contribution” savings accounts.

“What they’re proposing would not be even with what we’ve had,” violist Danny Lai told the *Militant* on the picket line March 15. And it’s divisive, he said, as it “splits the older players — who are vested and will keep the pensions they’ve earned — from the newer people,” who will only get the savings accounts.

The company’s proposed wage increases “won’t keep up with inflation,” Lai said, noting that the Chicago Symphony Orchestra contract has often been used as a pattern for other orchestras.

Strikers say they’ve been joined on the picket lines by workers from other unions, including teachers, electricians and stagehands.

—Naomi Craine

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 4, 1994

PARIS — Hundreds of thousands of students and trade unionists have taken to the streets across the country in recent weeks to protest a plan to create a separate, subminimum wage for young people.

The French ruling class argues that the lower wage is the only way to decrease unemployment, which is officially at 12.2 percent. If the wage for youth was lower, they argue, the capitalists would be able to hire more workers.

Under the new law, which went into effect March 22, workers under 25 years old can be paid 80 percent of the minimum wage of about \$1,000 a month. These workers will spend 20 percent of their time in what amounts to unpaid training classes.

The first demonstration on March 3 was called by student groups. One week later they were joined by forces organized by several trade union federations.



April 4, 1969

The E.R. Squibb plant in Brooklyn was closed indefinitely March 12 after a sit-in by 320 workers protested the company’s refusal to negotiate seniority, severance pay and pensions. Squibb had made an announcement that it would close the plant employing 700 workers. It offered to transfer all workers to its New Brunswick, N.J. plant but refused to tell what the job status of the transferred workers would be. Some of the men and women had worked in the Brooklyn plant for as long as 26 years.

Day-shift workers sat down in the plant. Police were called and 37 were arrested, charged with criminal trespass. The following day Squibb summarily fired 14 union leaders of Local 8-138, Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers Union for their part in the sit-in.

Thirty-seven workers remain under indictment. No negotiations meetings are scheduled.



April 1, 1944

Ferocious civil war is raging throughout the industrial cities of North Italy as anti-fascist workers and Italian Partisans battle arms in hand against the Nazi-Fascist forces of occupation.

The insurrectionary-movement has developed from the general strike of 6,000,000 workers which two weeks ago defied the Nazi ultimatum and terror and, according to the Naples Socialist newspaper, *Avanti*, scored “a victory in the first truly great mass movement in Europe against Nazism.”

So fierce was this struggle that the Nazis were compelled to yield to several of the most important immediate demands of the workers.

The tremendous proletarian struggle in North Italy has already demonstrated the unconquerable power of the working class. The effects of this struggle will be felt not only throughout Italy, but all of Europe, and in Germany itself.

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Long view of history on display at Iraqi museum

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The greatest of all battles confronting the working class in the years ahead is “the battle to throw off the self-image the rulers teach us, and to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society.” Those are the closing words by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S., in *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? — Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism*. That book was by far the

REPORT FROM BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

best seller at a booth featuring Pathfinder Press titles during the Feb. 7-18 Baghdad International Book Fair. Visitors to the fair went home with some 150 copies of the title, out of a total of 1,460 Pathfinder books sold there.

Participating for the first time in this annual Iraqi cultural event, volunteers at the Pathfinder booth had a chance to join issues of vital importance for working people everywhere. These nonstop political discussions and debates were given added urgency in a country whose people for decades — against their own will — have been at the sharp end of the breakdown of the capitalist “world order.”

Throwing off “the self-image the rulers” foist on working people and recognizing what we are capable of — as volunteers at the Pathfinder booth talked about time and again with visitors — are a byproduct first and foremost of involvement in *working-class social and political activity*, not of books and ideas. But as workers begin to engage in struggles, as Barnes puts it in *Are They Rich Because They’re Smart?*, we also begin to “collectively educate ourselves.”

We become interested in how the capitalist system of exploitation came to be, the better to understand how it can be overturned and replaced by working people. We want to learn about the advances toiling humanity has made, from the earliest humans who arose from the animal kingdom through toolmaking and hunting; to rebellions by slaves, serfs and laborers throughout history; to revolutionary battles by workers and farmers more recently, including the victorious Bolshevik-led and Cuban socialist revolutions over the past century.

We learn to place ourselves in “the long view of history,” to borrow the title of a pamphlet by George Novack,



Looting damage to Iraq National Museum, a direct result of the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.



Above, Pathfinder editorial director Steve Clark, left, and Ögmundur Jónsson in Assyrian gallery of Iraq National Museum. Photo posted online by Iraqi Museum Friends, Feb. 18. **Right**, The only statue of a woman in the Neo-Assyrian galleries (911-612 B.C.), which has massive statues and carvings of kings and their male servants. Rise of class-divided society degraded the status of women, images of whom were frequent millennia earlier.

an SWP leader of an earlier generation whose books on Marxism and history proved popular at the fair.

That’s why Pathfinder volunteers on our first visit to Baghdad were determined not to return home without a trip to the Iraq National Museum. Because there’s no better place to get a feel for that “long view of history.”

As the museum’s former director, Donny George Youkhanna, wrote in the *American Journal of Archaeology* in 2010, it contains “the material evidence for the development of civilized human society from the very beginning of its history. This entirely documented collection of finds from the cradle of civilization encapsulates the most essential cornerstones of our modern life, including agriculture, writing, laws, mathematics, astronomy, the arts, and warfare.”

What museum backers overcame

What’s on display at the Iraq National Museum is unique and extraordinary, not least when you consider the obstacles that stalwarts of the museum have overcome — including the infamous ransacking and thefts that were a direct result of the March 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

The earliest, rudimentary stone implements on display stretch back to

10,000-40,000 B.C. These are followed by stone tools for plowing, harvesting and grinding, as well as pottery, as humans started to till the earth and preserve foodstuffs to have a more reliable and bountiful diet. Further along, you see beautifully decorated tools and statuettes, early examples of art.

In galleries tracing the rise and fall of the Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian, Babylonian and other civilizations, you see how — as agriculture and domestication of animals were developed, and as the productivity of social labor increased — a surplus of food beyond that needed for mere survival became possible. On that basis, private property replaced communal life and came to dominate all social relations.

The most spectacular part of the museum is the Assyrian hall, which has massive statues and wall-reliefs from the Nimrud palace, all designed to inspire awe, *and fear*, of the king. At its zenith in the 7th century B.C., the Assyrian empire stretched from the Mediterranean to the mountains of western Iran, having subjugated the inhabitants in bloody massacres and forced them to pay tribute — the fruit of their toil — to the king.

Here we see how “the cradle of civilization” was at the same time the cradle of class-divided society and the exploitation of human labor. How a small number of men emerged, for the first time in human history, as a ruling class, subjugating other men and women in the course of bloody conflict.

We also see glimpses of the historic struggle as this new ruling class degraded the place of women in society, transforming them into property and laying the basis for millennia of women’s oppression. Early statues of fertility goddesses give way to kings and priests. Among the many impressive carvings and statues in the Assyrian hall, all depicting men — lords and servants — there is only one, crudely made statue of a woman.

The record of the origins of women’s oppression — and a course toward emancipation, as part of broader struggles by working people — are detailed

in books by SWP leaders Evelyn Reed, Mary-Alice Waters and Joseph Hansen, such as *Is Biology Woman’s Destiny?*, *Woman’s Evolution: Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*; and others. These were also among the best-selling titles at the Pathfinder booth during the Baghdad book fair (and at many other such events the world over).

Century of oppression and upheaval

The Iraq Museum traces its origins to the division of the Middle East between British and French imperialism following their victory in World War I, the first world imperialist slaughter, over the Ottoman Empire, based in what we today call Turkey. The British rulers patched together modern Iraq under the rule of their puppet, King Faisal Ibn Husayn.

The Iraq Museum was founded in 1923 when Gertrude Bell — who had been instrumental in imposing King Faisal on the Iraqi people, at the service of British imperialism — nonetheless stopped archaeologist Leonard Woolley from plundering the country of 5,000-year-old finds from the an-



Above, Iraqi family at Iraq National Museum Feb. 18. **Left**, “The Sacred Vase of Warka,” from Sumerian city of Uruk, around 3,000 B.C., depicts aspects of early class society. Starting at bottom, cultivated crops and domesticated sheep. Middle to top, laborers bring foods for king to present to priestess — a new ruling class appropriating what toilers have produced.

National Museum’s fortunes have been buffeted by violent conflict. During the 1980-88 war against

neighboring Iran, the public galleries were dismantled and many pieces put into storage. The Saddam Hussein regime launched that war — in which hundreds of thousands were slaughtered on both sides — with the combined aims of crushing the 1979 revolution by Iranian workers, farmers and youth, as well as occupying and annexing rich oil fields and strategic waterways and port facilities there.

In the decade that followed the 1990-91 military assault on Iraq by a U.S. imperialist-led coalition, the people of that country faced immense hardship under U.N.-imposed economic sanctions and repeated bombing raids by Washington. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives due to malnutrition and lack of medicines. During these years, the museum remained mostly closed, only reopening fully in 2000.

In March 2003, Washington, London, and other imperialist regimes — “the coalition of the willing” — again invaded Iraq, this time ousting the Saddam Hussein dictatorship and imposing a U.S.-government-organized occupation. Just after the first U.S. troops arrived in Baghdad, the museum suffered 36 hours of unrestrained looting April 10-12, with some 15,000 items stolen. This is widely regarded as one of the worst cases of cultural vandalism in modern times.

In his 2010 article, Youkhanna describes in the most restrained terms how officials of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage rejected an arrogant proposal from U.S. “Middle East expert” William R. Polk that they ship treasures abroad ahead of the invasion, which the entire world knew was coming. Instead, these Iraqi cultural workers sought to protect as much as possible Iraq’s archaeological patrimony. Objects were shipped to Baghdad from local museums. Five members of staff organized to move all portable objects to a secret location only they knew. The museum’s records and 40,000 historic manuscripts were placed in a bomb shelter. Movable shelves were put in closed position and welded together. Sandbags were piled to protect the

bulkier items, and doors and windows were blocked with concrete. These actions saved the bulk of the collection.

Efforts to retrieve stolen pieces began within a week of the looting. Many invaluable pieces were retrieved in the first months, including the “Warka Vase,” and the “Lady of Warka,” a stunningly realistic, life-size representation of a Sumerian woman’s head, both dating back to ca. 3,000 B.C. Eventually, some 7,000 pieces were retrieved.

Destruction and restoration

Iraq has continued to suffer devastation of its cultural heritage, with the most extreme destruction coming at the hands of Islamic State, as the terrorist group held large parts of Iraq from 2014 to 2017. In Mosul, the site of the ancient city of Nineveh, the group destroyed archaeological sites, the Mosul museum and the two main libraries.

All galleries of the Iraq National Museum are now open to the public six days a week. While security is tight and the struggle to secure sufficient funding is obvious to any visitor, the buildings and grounds are beautifully maintained, and items have been professionally restored and displayed. Volunteers from the Iraqi Museum Friends are eager to help visitors get the most out of the experience.

There is a daily stream of museum-goers, some from abroad, but mostly Iraqis of all ages taking in the wealth of knowledge and enjoying their national patrimony. Many of them recognize that it’s the patrimony of humanity, as well.

For further reading

Are They Rich Because They’re Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism

Jack Barnes

In the coming battles forced upon us by the capitalist rulers, workers will begin to transform ourselves and our attitudes toward life, work and each other. Only then will we discover our own worth and learn what we’re capable of becoming.

Woman’s Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family

by Evelyn Reed

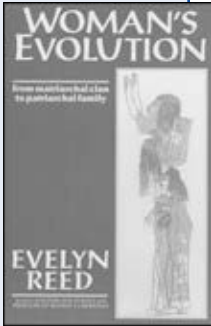
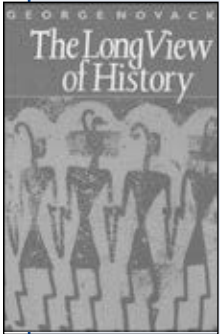
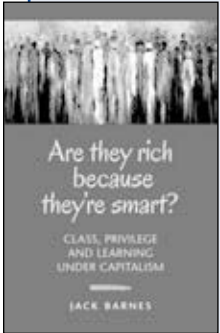
Reed takes us on an expedition through prehistory and uncovers the origins of women’s oppression with the rise of class-divided societies. She offers insights on the struggle for women’s emancipation and the liberation of working people, refuting the myth that “human nature” is to blame for wars, greed and class inequalities.

The Long View of History

by George Novack

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‘No imperialist regime can ever conduct a just war’

This week's Book of the Month is The Socialist Workers Party in World War II: Writings and Speeches, 1940-43 by James P. Cannon. The excerpt below is from "A Statement on the U.S. Entry into World War II, December 22, 1941." Cannon, a founding leader of the SWP, was framed up in 1941 and imprisoned by the U.S. rulers in 1944-45, along with 17 other leaders of the SWP and of the Minneapolis Teamsters union, for opposing Washington's imperialist war drive. Copyright © 1975 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

We considered the war upon the part of all the capitalist powers involved — Germany and France, Italy and Great Britain — as an *imperialist war*.

This characterization of the war was determined for us by the character of the state powers involved in it. They were all capitalist states in the epoch of imperialism; themselves imperialist — oppressing other nations or peoples — or satellites of imperialist powers. The extension of the war to the Pacific and the formal entry of the United States and Japan change nothing in this basic analysis.

Following Lenin, it made no difference to us which imperialist bandit fired the first shot; every imperialist power has for a quarter of a century been “at-



Most of the 18 convicted leaders of the SWP and Minneapolis Teamsters line up on way to prison, December 1943. This was U.S. rulers' first use of their thought-control Smith Act, adopted as Washington prepared to enter the inter-imperialist Second World War.

tacking” every other imperialist power by economic and political means; the resort to arms is but the culmination of this process, which will continue as long as capitalism endures.

This characterization of the war does not apply to the war of the Soviet Union against German imperialism. We make a fundamental distinction between the Soviet Union and its “democratic” allies. We defend the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a workers’ state, although degenerated under the totalitarian-political rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Only traitors can deny support to the Soviet workers’ state in its war against fascist Germany. To defend the Soviet Union, in spite of Stalin and against Stalin, is to defend the nationalized property established by the October Revolution. That is a *progressive war*.

The war of China against Japan we likewise characterize as a progressive war. We support China. China is a colonial country, battling for national independence against an imperialist power. A victory for China would be a tremendous blow against all imperialism, inspiring all colonial peoples to throw off the imperialist yoke. The reactionary regime of Chiang Kai-shek, subservient to the “democracies,” has hampered China’s ability to conduct a bold war for independence; but that does not alter for us the essential fact that China is an oppressed nation fighting against an

imperialist oppressor. We are proud of the fact that the Fourth Internationalists of China are fighting in the front ranks against Japanese imperialism.

None of the reasons which oblige us to support the Soviet Union and China against their enemies can be said to apply to France or Britain. These imperialist “democracies” entered the war to maintain their lordship over the hundreds of millions of subject peoples in the British and French empires; to defend these “democracies” means to defend their oppression of the masses of Africa and Asia. Above all it means to defend the decaying capitalist social order. We do not defend that, either in Italy and Germany, or in France and Britain — or in the United States.

The Marxist analysis which determined our attitude toward the war up to December 8, 1941, continues to determine our attitude now. We were internationalists before December 8; we still are. We believe that the most fundamental bond of loyalty of all the workers of the world is the bond of international solidarity of the workers against their exploiters. We cannot assume the slightest responsibility for this war. No imperialist regime can conduct a just war. We cannot support it for one moment.

We are the most irreconcilable enemies of the fascist dictatorships of Germany and Italy and the military dictatorship of Japan. Our cothinkers

of the Fourth International in the Axis nations and the conquered countries are fighting and dying in the struggle to organize the coming revolutions against Hitler and Mussolini.

We are doing all in our power to speed those revolutions. But those ex-socialists, intellectuals, and labor leaders, who in the name of “democracy” support the war of United States imperialism against its imperialist foes and rivals, far from aiding the German and Italian antifascists, only hamper their work and betray their struggle. The Allied imperialists, as every German worker knows, aim to impose a second and worse Versailles; the fear of that is Hitler’s greatest asset in keeping the masses of Germany in subjection. The fear of the foreign yoke holds back the development of the German revolution against Hitler. ...

In the midst of the war against Hitler, it is necessary to extend the hand of fraternity to the German people. This can be done honestly and convincingly only by a workers’ and farmers’ government. We advocate the workers’ and farmers’ government. Such a government, and only such a government, can conduct a war against Hitler, Mussolini, and the Mikado in cooperation with the oppressed peoples of Germany, Italy, and Japan. ...

Our aim is to convince the majority that our program is the only one which can put an end to war, fascism, and economic convulsions. In this process of education the terrible facts speak loudly for our contention. Twice in twenty-five years world wars have wrought destruction. The instigators and leaders of those wars do not offer, and cannot offer, a plausible promise that a third, fourth, and fifth world war will not follow if they and their social system remain dominant. Capitalism can offer no prospect but the slaughter of millions and the destruction of civilization. Only socialism can save humanity from this abyss. This is the truth. As the terrible war unfolds, this truth will be recognized by tens of millions who will not hear us now. The war-tortured masses will adopt our program and liberate the people of all countries from war and fascism. In this dark hour we clearly see the socialist future and prepare the way for it. Against the mad chorus of national hatreds we advance once more the old slogan of socialist internationalism: Workers of the World Unite!

March

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Writings and Speeches, 1940-43. Record of SWP's working-class opposition to Roosevelt's imperialist war aims in World War II. by James P. Cannon
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by Larry Seigle, Farrell Dobbs, Steve Clark
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The Militant April 1, 2019

Protest NZ rulers' attack on rights!

Continued from front page

This and other attacks on Muslims and mosques are a working-class issue. We must act on the principle of the workers' movement that "an injury to one is an injury to all." The defence of those who are scapegoated and victimised — be they Muslims, Jews, immigrants or others — is essential to building political unity of the working class and acting on the basis of solidarity with all who are exploited and oppressed.

Such attacks are an outgrowth of the political policies and actions of the capitalist rulers and their government. Anti-Muslim prejudice is used to justify their involvement in wars and spying by their police agencies, not only on mosques and Muslims, but on many others.

For more than 25 years the New Zealand government has been a partner in the endless imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. As the worldwide capitalist economic crisis continues with no end in sight, there will be more attacks on democratic and political rights and on workers and our unions at home, and trade wars and shooting wars abroad.

The call by Labour and National party leaders for

national unity in the wake of the massacre is the opposite of working-class solidarity. They seek to draw us behind the rulers' course at home and abroad. Already the government has signaled that it will respond to the massacre by beefing up the powers of its spies, immigration cops and other repressive instruments of state power. Such steps target working people and our rights.

There is no broad expansion of rightist or fascist currents in Australia, New Zealand, the United States or any other country today. The owners of industry and finance don't feel the need to turn to fascist gangs to preserve their class rule. There is less racism, less anti-immigrant sentiment among working people today, as immediately shown by the expressions of solidarity by working people throughout the country.

The Communist League pledges not only to protest this brutal assault, but to take this issue to workers of all backgrounds.

We demand: No to attacks on Muslims and mosques. Oppose attacks on democratic and political rights! Withdraw all New Zealand armed forces from the Middle East and elsewhere overseas!

Solidarity with Muslims, mosques in New Zealand

Continued from page 4

safe, the invaders were in all of our lands, even in the remotest areas of the world and that there was no where left to go that was safe and free from mass immigration."

Like other advanced capitalist nations, New Zealand society — and the working class in particular — has been transformed over the past few decades by immigration. In the case of New Zealand, this involves working people mostly from the Pacific, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. According to government figures, around a quarter of the 4.7 million people in this country were born overseas.

The gunman first opened fire at the Al Noor Mosque during Friday afternoon worship. Naeem Rashid, originally from Pakistan, was one of the first killed when he tried to disarm Tarrant. Most of the hundreds present were trapped as the gunman blazed away, using several different weapons.

After killing 42 people at Al Noor, the shooter fired at other worshippers attempting to flee and then drove several miles to the Linwood Mosque, where he butchered seven more people. The slaughter ended when a would-be victim, Abdul Aziz from Afghanistan, coolly succeeded in diverting his fire and scared him off. Police rammed Tarrant's car and arrested him. One other shooting victim died at a hospital.

Thousands of people turned out for a rally in central Auckland the next day. The speakers' panel was weighted heavily toward capitalist politicians, especially representatives of the Labour Party, which leads the coalition government.

The rally program echoed Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who has repeatedly appealed for national unity and patriotism. She promotes the slogan "They are us," and claims that New Zealand's capitalist rule "represent[s] diversity, kindness, compassion. A home for those who share our values."

Ardern and other bourgeois politicians are pushing to respond to the slaughter by boosting New Zealand's security and intelligence agencies to better spy and keep tabs on working people. She has said repeatedly the government will take steps to restrict access to gun ownership.

Communist League statement

Starting from a different class basis, the Communist League is widely distributing a statement condemning the rightist attack, explaining such assaults "are an outgrowth of the course of the capitalist rulers and their government." (See above.)

The statement demanded, "No to attacks on Muslims and mosques! Oppose attacks on democratic and political rights! Withdraw all New Zealand armed forces from the Middle East and elsewhere overseas!"

Coggan and Vermunt discussed the statement the next day as they knocked on doors in Linwood and talked with workers and youth gathered in solidarity outside the Linwood Mosque.

Several mentioned discrimination faced by workers who are immigrants. "We're all the same human beings under the skin," a young construction worker told them when they knocked on his door. He explained how Filipino construction workers — who have played a key role in rebuilding parts of Christchurch after the devastating 2011 earthquake — face special exploitation by bosses.

The two Communist League members also visited the organizing center for gathering support for those affected by the massacres, set up at Hagley College, a community college in the city.

"I've never seen anything like it," Coggan said. "Scores of volunteers, many but not entirely Muslim or immigrant, staffing different tables and stations offering all kinds of assistance — missing persons' inquiries, food aid, other support services and organizing volunteers coming to help."

A representative of the Muslim elders' committee thanked the Communist League representatives for their solidarity and took their statement with cover letters to deliver to the two mosques.

Solidarity and aid is coming from all over the world. The congregation of the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh — where 11 Jewish worshippers were killed in an anti-Semitic assault last October — launched a drive to raise \$100,000 for the two mosques in Christchurch.

Syria gov't offensive

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airstrikes on Idlib March 13, its first since Moscow had agreed to a "de-escalation zone" in the province with Turkish rulers last year. At least 13 people were killed. Like "de-escalation" deals imposed elsewhere in the country this one has been a prelude to further destruction inflicted by Assad and Moscow.

Militias backed by the Iranian rulers — to bolster their regional expansion — reinforced Moscow's airstrikes with ground assaults on areas of Idlib held by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the former al-Qaeda group.

The Turkish rulers have intervened in Syria to arm groups fighting Assad, and to deal blows to Kurds who have been fighting for their national rights.

The Kurdish people, divided across Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey have fought to assert their national sovereignty denied by the capitalist rulers there for decades. The Kurds are the largest nationality denied their own state in the world.

The Syrian government has intensified its own airstrikes on people in Idlib since mid-February, forcing some 100,000 to flee their homes. Nearly half of the 3 million people living in the densely populated province fled there to escape Moscow's and Assad's war drive elsewhere in the country.

This civil war followed a 2011 popular uprising by working people who courageously fought to overturn Assad's repressive rule. He crushed their rebellion, but different opposition forces took up arms and wrested control of large parts of the country. Assad was able to begin retaking territory after Moscow intervened and began intensive bombing of rebel-held areas.

Washington stuck in a quagmire

Syrian Democratic Forces launched assaults on the Islamic State-held town of Baghouz near Syria's Iraqi border March 11. Unwilling to deploy troops in a ground war to defeat IS, the U.S. rulers have concentrated on using their deadly airpower to back the Syrian Democratic Forces doing the fighting to oust IS.

Former residents say hundreds have been killed and nearby villages razed to the ground in the bombing by the Washington-backed forces. Tens of thousands have fled, many to the al-Hol refugee camp, which was built for 20,000 people but is now home to 65,000. Scores have died on the journey.

The U.S. government said it would withdraw all 2,000 of its troops stationed in Syria by April, saying the war against IS was over. But now Washington finds itself stuck. Officials told the *Wall Street Journal* March 17 that up to 1,000 U.S. troops will remain in the country.

The Turkish regime of Recep Tayyip Erdogan insists it will invade Syria to crush the SDF. It claims the group is a pawn for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey, which has waged a war against Ankara on and off for decades.

Washington tried to convince Ankara that British and French troops of its allied "coalition" in the Syria war would police a demilitarized zone to be established on the Syrian Kurds' border with Turkey, but both London and Paris as well as Ankara demurred.

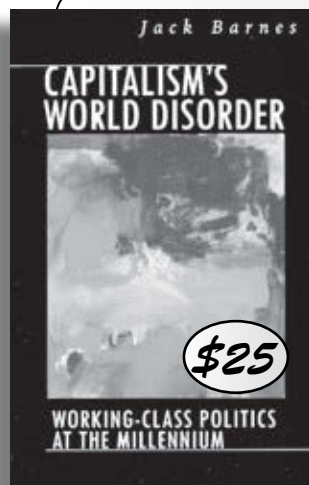
U.S. troops will be deployed near the Turkish border to keep Ankara and the Kurds apart — as long as the Kurds continue to serve the needs of Washington. Army Lt. Gen. Paul LaCamera, commander of U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria, threatened to halt all U.S. military assistance to the SDF in February if its leaders sought to bloc with Assad or Moscow to fend off Ankara's threats.

The U.S. rulers will also maintain their base at al-Tanf on Syria's southern border with Iraq, as a counter to incursions by the Iranian rulers' forces into Syria.

The continued intervention by Washington, as well as Moscow, Tehran and Ankara, leads to carnage for working people in Syria and is an obstacle to finding the road to defend their own interests and organize to bring down the Assad dictatorship.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

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"And with revolutionary leadership, forged and tested in coming struggles, the international working class has the numbers, the social power, the culture, the values and the program to defeat the reactionary forces loosened by finance capital." — Jack Barnes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*

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